

ZACCHAEUS. 3

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

Parish Church of St. JAMES,

mon In the City of BRISTOL,

BEFORE THE

My Society of Ancient Britons,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

The First of MARCH, 1769.

By the Rev. EDWARD DAVIES, M. A.

Imp Prebendary of the Cathedral Church of Landaff, Rector of
Portskuet, and Vicar of Matthern, in Monmouthshire.

Published at the Request of the PRESIDENT,

And MEMBERS of the SOCIETY,

For the BENEFIT of the CHARITY.

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T O
MORGAN LEWIS,

O F

St. *Peer*, in the County of *Monmouth*, Esq;

P R E S I D E N T,

THE FOLLOWING

D I S C O U R S E

Is, with all Respect and Gratitude,

I N S C R I B E D,

By

His most obliged

humble Servant,

EDWARD DAVIES.

MORGAN LEWIS

St. Paul, Minn. Council of the City

PRESIDENT

THE FOLLOWING

DISCOURSE

Is with all Respect and Gratitude

PRESENTED

His most obliged

humble servant

EDWARD DAVIES

LUKE xix. 5.

ZACCHEUS MAKE HASTE AND COME
DOWN, FOR TO DAY I MUST ABIDE
AT THY HOUSE.

THE many pious Institutions established in this great and opulent City for the Relief of the Indigent and Distressed ; and the frequent Returns of these Solemnities for the more effectually carrying them into Execution ; in which the Nature and Duty of Charity are so forcibly inculcated and imprinted upon your Minds with all the Strength of Reason and Argument, have left so little new Matter for me to offer to your present Consideration ; that I shall venture to deviate from the usual Method of discoursing upon this Occasion ; and instead of laying before you the Nature and Properties

ties of Charity, the Obligations we lie under as we are Men, and as we are Christians to the constant and chearful Performance of it, I shall attempt to draw the Character, and hold forth to your View the Portrait of a Person very eminent for the Discharge of this Duty.

THE Out-lines of this amiable Character and Picture are already marked out by the inspired Pencil of St. *Luke*, it remains for me only to fill up the void Spaces in the Piece, but it must be with much fainter and more imperfect Colours.

Look up then into that spreading Sycamore Tree, on whose Branches you may perceive a Man who looks down with an eager Curiosity ; observe how he supports himself with his Hands, and how he advances his Body in order to take a full View of *Him* he so long wished to see. What Joy and Pleasure is painted in his Face, arising from the pleasing Hope that
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he should no longer be debarred the pious Satisfaction of seeing a Sight he so ardently desired? He is not frustrated in his Hopes nor disappointed in his Expectations. For behold a great Croud advancing, and in the midst of the Multitude see *Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God*: The Miracles that he had wrought and the many wonderful Things related of him had reached the Ears of *Zaccheus*; who being, as you may observe, a Man *little of Stature*, was determined, at the Peril and Hazard of his Life, to take a full and perfect View of so divine and truly celebrated a Person. Such a lively Faith and so laudable a Curiosity could not possibly escape the Notice of our blessed LORD. For see how he stops under the Sycomore Tree making Signs to him with his Eyes and Hands to come down, which are soon followed by these gracious Expressions : *Zaccheus make haste and come down, for to Day I must abide at thy House.*

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THE Omniscience of our blessed LORD enabled him to see into the Heart of *Zaccheus*.—He at first Sight fully comprehended the Goodness and Uprightness of his Intentions.---That it was not an idle Curiosity which had led him into so exalted and dangerous a Situation, but a hearty Desire to see him, that he might be able, during the Remainder of his Life, to tell his Friends and Acquaintance that he had once seen a Man, who made it the whole Business of his Life *to go about doing Good*. How great must have been the Transport he felt in his Heart, when, not expecting that JESUS would even cast up his Eyes towards him, he hears him addressing himself to him in the most familiar Terms! Our blessed LORD, you see, did not stay to be invited by him, but knowing his Affection, by the eager Desire he had to see him, invited himself; being resolved to pay with ample Interest the magnificence of the Entertainment that should be given him; for
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it was not possible the holy JESUS could be outdone in conferring Benefits and Favours. *Zaccheus* makes him an Entertainment to nourish his Body, and in Return receives such spiritual Refreshments as sanctified his Soul. He opened his Doors to the Saviour of the World and his Apostles, and Salvation entered with them. He was at some small Expence to treat his LORD, and gained Heaven by so prudent a Distribution of his Goods. And here might we not naturally expect to see the whole Multitude that surrounded our blessed LORD upon this Occasion, expressing, in their Looks and Gestures, the most lively Marks of Joy and Gladness, on observing the infinite Condescension of our blessed LORD in taking such particular Notice of, as well as the Readiness and Alacrity of *Zaccheus*, in accepting the Honour that was intended him ; for he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. But a Behaviour, the very reverse of what
might

might have been expected, took Place upon this tender and interesting Interview ; for St. *Luke* tells us,---that *when they saw it they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be Guest with a Man, that is a Sinner.*

THIS is not the first nor the last Instance of Delusion, that has happened to the Multitude ; which may teach us, that the antient Plains of Jericho had no better Title to Infallibility, than the Palaces of modern Rome. A Conduct so strange and unaccountable would astonish and surprize us, did not St. *Luke* clear up this Difficulty, by telling us he was *Chief among the Publicans* ; very probably a Roman Knight, a middle Rank of Men at Rome between the Senators and People, instituted by *Romulus* the Founder of the City ; and to whose Care about this Time we find the Collection of the publick Revenues was generally intrusted. The Publicans, you see then, were the Farmers
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or Receivers of the Taxes and Customs exacted by the Roman Emperors in the several Provinces subdued by their Arms.

Zaccheus was settled in this Employment at this Time in Jericho, and was become obnoxious to the Jews in all probability upon no other Account than that of the Office he exercised among them. For the Jews, who called themselves the People of God, bore with great Impatience the Tributes that were laid upon them; and therefore looked upon the Farmers and Collectors of them as Persons, with whom they would hold no manner of Conversation. Hence Publican and Sinner became synonymous Terms among the Jews; and the very Office, not the Abuse of it, made, in their Estimation, the Man a Sinner: but in this they were grossly mistaken; for the Profession, far from being reproachable in itself, ought to be considered as absolutely necessary to the Being and Support of a State. Princes,
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in order to support the Charges of the State, to defend it against Enemies abroad, and to maintain Tranquility at Home are obliged to lay Taxes and Imposts upon their Subjects; and when fairly and candidly levy'd, and honestly and properly apply'd, become beneficial to the People, by the Protection and Security they reap from them.

THE Jews were a selfish and narrow-minded People, and they could not give stronger Proofs of it, than by confining Virtue and Goodness to any Profession or Place, to any one Sect or Country; all Nations, all Professions and Sects affording us numberless Instances to the contrary.

VIRTUE and Vice are the Growth of every Country; they are to be met with amongst all Degrees and Orders of Men, in all Places and in all Ages of the World; and it is our proper Business and Duty to encourage and promote the one

one wheresoever we find her, and to fly from and discountenance the other in every Rank and Condition of Life.

ALL the Inhabitants of this World were made out of the same Clay, and fashioned by the same gracious Hand; the Almighty Maker has imparted to every Man the Sense to distinguish between Good and Evil, and therefore the Publican, if it be not his own Fault, may be as honest and upright as the Priest, and have his Share in these blessed Words, *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of the Lord.*

I HAVE dwelt the longer upon this publick Part of the Character of *Zaccheus*, as it was the only one the Jews could object to, and to shew you likewise with how little Reason they did so. I come now to present him to you in a Light, that Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks must admire: Hear him speak for himself. And *Zaccheus* stood and said

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unto the LORD. *Behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor.*

What a glorious Object have I now placed before your Eyes, an Object which the Son of God looked upon with Satisfaction and Pleasure.

ATTENTIVELY therefore consider, and view him, breaking through all the Shackles and Impediments the Love of Riches placed in his Way; casting his Bread upon the Waters without any fordid Hopes of receiving it again; scattering it among those that could not repay him, for he scattered it among the Poor: View him enquiring after, and diligently searching for, every Object of Distress; visiting every obscure Corner in Jericho, and the uncomfortable Habitations of the Miserable; entering into the Houses of Mourning, in preference to those of Feasting; listening to, and following the piercing Voice of Lamentation and Wo; pouring Wine and Oil into every Wound

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he met with in his Way, and restoring, by his Bounty, to Life and Health, those that were ready to perish.

Is there any Thing in this World more delightful than contemplating the Actions of a Man like this; attending him in the Pursuit of such divine Exercises, and treading as near as we can in his Steps?

BUT more particularly let us, that are here now assembled, attend him in the two following laudable Pursuits. Let us enter with him into the House of the industrious but indigent Artificer, who is scarce able to support himself and Family by the utmost Exertion of his Industry and Strength; let us enquire with him into the Number and Necessities of his Family; and after being well and faithfully informed in every Particular it was necessary for us to know, let us join with him to make the Father's Heart sing for Joy,

Joy, by easing him of Part of his Load ; making a comfortable Provision for one of his Sons, and doing what he was not in a Capacity of doing himself ; settling him to learn the Art and Mystery of some useful Trade or Occupation, and thereby putting him in a certain Way of being an useful Member of Society ; and of providing, if he answers the good Intentions of so laudable a Design, for the Necessities of himself and his aged and impotent Parents.

FROM Seeds thus sown Posterity will reap Fruits with Increase, by finding thro' our Care and Providence, an honest and laborious Set of Men provided to supply them with the various Necessaries they stand in Need of ; a Set of Men who have been taught in their Youth to look upon Fraud and Extortion as a Crime, and to do as they would be done by in every Respect.

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LET us now attend him to more distressful and agonizing Scenes. The Children are come to the Birth, and there is not Strength to bring forth. Trouble and Heaviness are at Hand, and the Snares of Death compass them round about. Root and Branch are in the utmost Danger from the Violence of the approaching Storm. *Zaccheus* hears their Groans and hastens to their Assistance. Let us enter with him for our own spiritual Advantage and Information, into one of these Houses of real Mourning and Wo. Poverty and Distress are visible in every Corner of this wretched Habitation, and Want and Affliction reign there together.

SEE the tender Husband steeped in Tears sitting by the disconsolate Partner of his Bed, lamenting his unhappy Fate, having it not in his Power to procure for her the necessary Means of Preservation. Tears and Moans are the ineffectual Remedies he administers to her. In the
midst

midst of so much Distress how seasonable is the Approach of *Zaccheus*. The Scene becomes soon alter'd, and every Want is immediately supply'd. Comfort and Safety have enter'd with him, for he resolves to furnish every Necessary, during the trying Time of Need, and to defray every Charge at his own Expence, extending his Attention and Liberality beyond the visible Objects of this World, and stretching out his friendly Hand to the Being yet unborn. He thinks it not sufficient to weep with those that weep, but administers to them more substantial Comforts; provides those Things that are needful for the Body, and contrary to the Example of the unmerciful Priest and Levite in the Gospel, who, like the Sensitive Plant, avoided and shrunk from the Touch of their wounded and half expiring Countryman, thinks it his indispensable Duty to approach and relieve every Object of Distress. Pain, Anguish, Horror, and Despair, fly before him, Joy and

and Gladness take their Place, and the Voice of Thanksgiving succeeds that of Grief;—the reviving Mother *remembereth no more the Anguish for Joy that a Man is born into the World.* What Heart can be insensible to the Charms of such a Conduct, and what Ear so unmusical as not to be ravished with the Sound of these melodious Words addressed by him to the Husband before he leaves his House, *See thy Wife and thy Child liveth, —Take Care of them, and whatsoever more thou spendest upon this Occasion, when I come again I will repay thee.*

I MIGHT now go on to present him to you in the very Act of cloathing the Naked, and feeding the Hungry; visiting the Receptacles of the Diseased, the Maimed and the Infirm, and the Habitations of the Unfortunate of every Kind; for we may suppose he left none of these Things undone; because St. *Luke* tells us he was very rich; and a very rich Man, whose
Inclinations

Inclinations are equal to his Wealth, and who resolves to divide his Goods fairly between himself and the Neceffitous, may liberally contribute towards the Support of every Fund established for making a Provision for the Poor. But the Time will not permit me to lead you over so extensive and delightful a Field, for I must now hasten to lay before you the last beautiful Feature in this Piece. *If I have taken any Thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

Zaccheus is a perfect Model in every Light, and will bear the most critical Examination in every Attitude and Situation. We see now the most exact and scrupulous Justice succeeding the most diffusive and disinterested Charity. It was no Misfortune to fall into his Hands, for those that did so, through Mistake, thro' false Accusation, or by any other Means, always found their Advantage in it, for it was not his Custom to sit down, like
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an Usurer, and calculate arithmetically by Pounds, Shillings, and Pence, with their various Fractions, what was the exact Value of the Wrong done by him, least he should over-pay it ; but breaking through every mean and self-interested Propensity, he resolves to make ample Restitution, *good Measure pressed down and running over* ;—generously restores four-fold, and thus makes his involuntary Oppressions turn out, not to his own, but to the Benefit of the Oppressed.

IN a great and trading City like this, where buying and selling are perpetually going on, and where so much Business of every Kind must be daily transacted, the Necessity and Obligation of Restitution may be profitably and advantageously enlarged upon to the utmost Extent of a Discourse from this Place ; but neither the Time nor the Occasion permit it at present ; and yet I hope, nevertheless, that the powerful Example before us, will

have its due Weight ; and that every one who has unfortunately failed in this Part of his Duty, will restore, if very rich, fourfold, or if not in a Capacity to do that, to the utmost of his Power ; and where no Satisfaction can be made, and the injured Parties cannot be met with, the best and only Way left to satisfy that Debt is by casting a Sin-offering into this or some other of the publick Receptacles of Charity founded in this City ; which thus become useful to the Rich as well as the Poor ; for while they afford Relief to the one, they give the others also (what they sometimes may want, in Order to quiet their Consciences) an happy Opportunity of discharging an Obligation, that could in no other Manner be done.

I have now finished my Piece, and you have *Zaccheus* at full Length before you ; and however imperfect the Execution may be, yet I presume he appears, through his
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own native Worth and Excellence, lovely and venerable in your Eyes, and speaks more pathetically, and intercedes more powerfully with your Consciences than the most persuasive Words or Arguments : I shall not therefore venture with any of my own weak and imperfect Exhortation, to step between you and so powerful an Intercessor for the Poor, but trust with great Confidence the Success of this Day to the Force of his Example and Eloquence, *who being dead yet speaketh.*

IT remains only for me now to call upon you to join with me in addressing the Almighty LORD of Heaven and Earth, in the Words of one of our most excellent Church Collects, very pertinent to the present Purpose.

O LORD who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth ; send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift
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of Charity, the very Bond of Peace and
of all Virtues, without which whosoever
liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant
this for thine only Son JESUS CHRIST's
Sake. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

